



Interreg Baltic Sea Region Third call for core projects Applications tackling challenges under Programme Priority 1 and Priority 3

Announcement Note

Call duration: 17 January 2024 – 21 June 2024

1. Context of the call

Interreg Baltic Sea Region (the Programme) is a source of EU funding for public and private actors who want to shape the Baltic Sea region to become more innovative, water-smart and climate-neutral. It creates an environment for cooperation across borders to develop, test and put into practice smart solutions for the benefit of people around the Baltic Sea. Its added value is the transnational dimension of the supported actions. The Programme exploits opportunities and addresses issues which cannot sufficiently be dealt with by single countries, but require a joint response by partners from several countries in the Baltic Sea region.

The Programme area covers nine countries. It comprises eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden) and one third country (parts of Norway). The detailed geographical coverage of the Programme is defined in the Programme Document published on the Programme portal at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/about/>.

The Programme is designed under the territorial cooperation goal of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union.

2. Focus of the call

The Programme is launching the third call for core projects. The call is **open exclusively for applications tackling challenges under Priority 1 and Priority 3**.

Priority 1 Innovative societies

Under the thematic focus of Priority 1, the Programme particularly invites applicants who wish to address the following challenges:



Responding to societal challenges

- Enhancing **disaster preparedness** through active engagement of actors at various levels including civil society, e.g. improving societal security or improving the ability to **respond effectively to extreme weather events** such as droughts, floods, and **other disasters**;
- Safeguarding **the well-being and safety of communities**, e.g. introducing models and services with particular consideration of vulnerable populations or nurturing social and economic initiatives responding to **recent geo-political challenges** tailored to the **needs of specific territories and population groups**;
- Providing **support to businesses undergoing transition**, e.g. offering assistance to the creative and cultural sector or reducing the dependency of the Baltic Sea region on global supply chains.

Harnessing digitalisation potential

- Introducing **state-of-the-art technologies and tools** in the management of **public services**, e.g. development of smart health solutions or inclusive social service aimed at promoting social welfare;
- Deploying **digital monitoring** to swiftly identify challenges and enable more rapid and effective responses, e.g. in the field of **biodiversity and climate change**.

The Programme also welcomes core project applications on other Priority 1 topics. A detailed description of Priority 1, its objectives and examples of actions to be financed can be found in the Programme Document published at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Approved-2021-27-IBSR-Programme-document.pdf>. The information is also presented at the Programme portal <https://interreg-baltic.eu/about/priorities-2021-2027/priority-1-innovative-societies/> and in the tutorials on the Programme objectives published under: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/>.

Priority 3 Climate-neutral societies

The Programme exclusively considers core project applications addressing the topic of climate change within the thematic framework of Priority 3 as set out in the Programme Document.

On the topic of climate change, the Programme strongly promotes applications that address the following challenges:

- Adopting and implementing better integrated and more systemic approaches to **planning processes in sectors key to mitigating climate change** (e.g. infrastructure for alternative fuels, green urban logistic systems, infrastructure for renewable energy);
- Mainstreaming climate-conscious perspective through **participatory and inclusive approaches**, e.g. ensuring fair transition and combating energy poverty or developing accessible mobility solutions with the needs of the most vulnerable users and territories in mind;





- Implementing effective strategies to combat climate change by improving **the generation, distribution, utilisation and storage of energy** through e.g. smart energy systems or utilisation of harbours as green energy hubs;
- **Promoting circular practices** as a means to address climate change, e.g. **supporting businesses and communities** in taking up circular approaches (e.g. in transport, water, energy and waste management).

3. Programme funding earmarked for projects

The main funding source of the Programme is the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for partners from the EU Member States. The further funding source is Norwegian funding for partners from Norway.

Programme co-financing allocated to this call:

Priority	Earmarked funds in million euro*	
	ERDF	Norwegian funds**
1. Innovative societies	13.7	1.1
3. Climate-neutral societies	27.0	

* Status as of October 2023

** Allocation of funds by priority is indicative

- **Co-financing rate**

Partners from EU Member States are entitled to receive up to 80% co-financing from ERDF. Norwegian partners will receive up to 50% co-financing from Norwegian funding. Project partners have to provide their own contribution to receive Programme funding.

- **Reimbursement of preparation costs**

Projects can apply for reimbursement of costs related to the preparation of the project proposal. Only projects selected by the Monitoring Committee can have their preparation costs reimbursed. The reimbursement of preparation costs is a lump sum. It amounts to EUR 24,000 total eligible expenditure, which corresponds to EUR 19,200 of the Programme funding. Projects that have received any other EU



funds specifically designed to the development of the respective project application will not receive a reimbursement of preparation costs. For further details please consult the Programme Manual (chapter D.3.5).

4. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The Programme actively supports the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its three objectives: Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity. Many of the policy areas of the EUSBSR action plan are well reflected in the thematic objectives of the Programme. The expected Programme's contribution to the EUSBSR is described in the Programme Document and on the Programme portal at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/about/eusbsr/>. The Programme encourages applicants to get acquainted with this information as well as the action plan to the EUSBSR. More information regarding the EUSBSR is provided at <https://eusbsr.eu/>.

The Programme also recommends checking the possible contribution of project ideas to policy areas of the Strategy and their particular actions. The policy area coordinators of the EUSBSR (PACs) can help in this process of development and implementation of project ideas that help achieve the objectives of the EUSBSR action plan. PACs may also support policy dialogues in projects and help with the dissemination of results. Contacts to PACs can be found at <https://eusbsr.eu/contacts/eusbsr-actors>.

5. Main features of core projects

Core projects are the primary tool to deliver the change Interreg Baltic Sea Region aims at. All core projects are requested to **prepare, pilot and transfer practical and durable solutions** to the challenges they choose to tackle. These **challenges must be aligned with the focus of this call**.

The main results of a core project are increased capacities of the target groups to deal with the defined challenges. **The target groups** are organisations that have competencies to influence the challenge and are interested in the solutions. Therefore, reaching out to the target groups and involving them in the preparation, piloting and transfer of the solution is crucial for the success of a core project.

Activities in a core project are **structured in three work packages** (WP): WP1 Preparing solutions; WP2 Piloting and evaluating solutions; WP3 Transferring solutions.

The duration of a core project consists of three phases: the contracting phase that usually lasts three months, the implementation phase that may last up to 36 months, and the closure phase lasting three months.

For further details on core projects please consult the Programme Manual (chapter D) published on the Programme portal at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/toolkit/programme-manual-2021-2027/>.



6. Project partnership

- **Geographical composition**

The project partnership has to include **at least three project partners from three different countries of the Programme area**: a lead partner and at least two project partners. At least two of the project partners have to be located in the territory of two different EU Member States in the Programme area.

As a general rule, organisations located in the regions belonging to the Programme area can become project partners. **In exceptional cases**, organisations from outside the Programme area can also apply as project partners. For more details please consult the Programme Manual (chapter C.2.3).

- **Lead partners, project partners and associated organisations**

The partnership builds on the lead partner principle. Each project has to appoint a lead partner responsible for preparing and submitting the application. The lead partner bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The lead partner is also the link between the project partners and the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat of the Programme.

Lead partners:

- Must be legally registered in a Member State or Norwegian territory covered by the Programme area. A legal entity located in Germany or Norway (in the sense of legal registration) but outside the Programme area can still become a lead partner if it follows specific obligations defined in the Programme Manual (chapter C.1.2).
- Must fall into the legal status category “public” defined in the Programme Manual (chapter C.2.1).

The Programme Manual (chapter C) details which types of legal entities can be lead partners and project partners and provides lists of their responsibilities in the project. The lead partner and all project partners should have a clearly defined role in the project’s implementation and corresponding budget.

The applications can also include **associated organisations** that support the project implementation using their own resources.

- **Competencies of project partners**

It is essential that project partners possess the necessary competencies required to achieve the expected project results. The cooperation should also include representatives of specific target groups. This will ensure that their needs are effectively identified and addressed throughout the duration of the project. Any legal entity falling into one of the legal status categories defined by the Programme can be a partner in the project. However, the Programme strongly promotes the active involvement of public authorities in project partnerships.



7. Application procedure and deadlines

First, lead applicants **must complete and submit to the MA/JS a project idea form (PIF)**. In the PIF, lead applicants briefly describe the challenge, partnership, draft work plan and planned budget. The completed PIF must be sent to the MA/JS any time after the call is opened but **no later than 17 April 2024**. The MA/JS provides feedback to applicants via consultations based on the submitted PIFs. The MA/JS aims to provide a consultation to all applicants who wish to have one. Early submission of the PIF will support the MA/JS to fulfil this aim.

PIFs submitted to the MA/JS will be available for the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. Upon applicants' consent, PIFs will also be shared with the policy area coordinators (PACs) of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The Monitoring Committee members and PACs may contact lead applicants and provide guidance on further development of project ideas. The MA/JS will not receive information about the guidance provided by the Monitoring Committee members or PACs. It is up to the project partnership to consider how to incorporate the received advice.

Any information in the project idea form, including the MA/JS feedback during the consultation, will not influence the quality assessment of the submitted applications. The MA/JS will conduct the quality assessment solely based on the information from the submitted applications.

To fill in a **project application form** and work with **further documents and forms** (partner declarations, contact information, bank information), lead applicants must apply for **access** to the electronic data exchange system **BAMOS+** (<https://baplus.bamos.eu/>). **Requests for access to BAMOS+ must be submitted by 17 April 2024 at the latest.**

The project application and all further documents and forms must be completed and submitted via BAMOS+ by the deadline of 21 June 2024 16:00 CEST.

The table below summarises the process of the application procedure. **All documents and forms are submitted in the digital format only.**

What?	How?	When?
Project idea form (PIF)	A lead applicant submits a completed PIF via e-mail: idea@interreg-baltic.eu . In the PIF, a lead applicant may request a consultation with the MA/JS on the project idea. The template of PIF is available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/consultations/.	No later than 17 April 2024



Request for an account in BAMOS+	<p>After submission of the PIF, a lead applicant requests a login to BAMOS+ via e-mail: account@bamos.eu</p> <p>The template of a request for an account in BAMOS+ (log-in to BAMOS+) is available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/bamos-account/.</p>	<p>No later than 17 April 2024</p>
Project application	<p>A lead applicant submits the completed application form in BAMOS+.</p>	<p>No later than 21 June 2024 16:00 CEST</p>
Partner declarations, signed by each project partner, including a lead applicant	<p>After submission of the completed application form, a lead applicant uploads to the Document Centre in BAMOS + the signed partner declarations, either with advanced or qualified electronic signatures or scanned copies with handwritten signatures.</p> <p>The template of the partner declaration is available at interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/calls/.</p>	
Contact information for each project partner, including a lead applicant, and each associated organisation	<p>After submission of the completed application form, the Contact & Bank information section in BAMOS+ becomes available.</p>	<p>No later than 21 June 2024 16:00 CEST</p>
Bank information of the lead applicant's bank account	<p>The section must be completed and submitted by the lead applicant.</p>	

After receiving applications:

- The MA/JS checks the completeness and correctness of all submitted documents and forms. This step is called an admissibility check. Applicants can find the admissibility check criteria in the Programme Manual (chapter D.2).
- The MA/JS conducts the quality assessment of the applications based on the assessment criteria. Applicants can find the assessment criteria in the Programme Manual (chapter D.2.3).





The Monitoring Committee of the Programme is responsible for the final selection of applications. The selection is planned to take place in November 2024.

The Monitoring Committee reserves the right not to select all applications demonstrating sufficient quality. Throughout the selection process, in addition to the quality criteria, the Monitoring Committee may consider various additional factors, such as the achievement of the Programme's strategic objectives, the existing portfolio of already approved projects, and their thematic and geographical coverage.

8. Further information and assistance

The official language of the Programme is English. Therefore, all communication between applicants and the MA/JS is held in English. Information in project idea forms, application forms and official correspondence must be in English.

The official Programme documents are available on the Programme portal at interreg-baltic.eu and include:

- Programme Document;
- Programme Manual;
- Application package

The MA/JS offers the following assistance to applicants:

- Gateway for applicants at interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/
- Matchmaking platform at matchmaking.interreg-baltic.eu
- Online tutorials published at interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/
- Webinars
- Individual consultations (after submission of PIF)
- BAMOS+ helpdesk at helpdesk@bamos.eu
- General advice at info@interreg-baltic.eu